



*Lessons Learned from the 1995 Patuxent River Naval Air
Station Base Realignment and Closure Act Experience*

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Introduction

The Patuxent River Naval Air Station Complex (*Pax River*) was affected by the 1991, 1993 and 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) that relocated facilities in Warminster, Pennsylvania; Trenton, New Jersey; and Arlington, Virginia, to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in St. Mary's County, Maryland. With the final BRAC decision of 1995, the Southern Maryland region was facing a potential influx of new residents and over 6,800¹ new jobs.

To determine how the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) can assist communities preparing for the upcoming BRAC realignments within the State, MDOT conducted interviews with stakeholders who participated in the 1995 Pax River BRAC realignment to identify lessons learned that will help MDOT provide assistance to those communities preparing for the next round of BRAC realignments.

Growth in Southern Maryland

It's important to note that prior to the BRAC realignment, the Southern Maryland region was experiencing significant population and employment growth which was impacting local infrastructure and facilities. The impending BRAC move in the mid 1990's would add more residents and jobs to a region already experiencing growth.

During the 1980's the Southern Maryland Region was growing rapidly, with an average annual growth rate of 3.17% between 1980-1990 while the State of Maryland grew at 1.26%. During this same period, St. Mary's County experienced a 2.41% annual growth rate as its population increased from 59,895 in 1980 to 75,974 in 1990. By the 2000 Census, St. Mary's County growth rate had slowed to 1.27% with a total population of 86,211. As the County's population increased so did the number of households in the region. Beginning in 1980, there were 18,791 households in the County, increasing to 25,500 households by 1990. By 2000, the number of households increased to 30,642.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, job growth in the Southern Maryland region was 6.2% during the 1980-1990 period, the highest in the State of Maryland. From 1980-1990, St. Mary's annual job growth rate was 5.49%, declining to 3.17% between 1990-2000. The growth rate stabilized to 3.04% by 2005. Median Household income also rose significantly from \$37,158 in 1989 to \$54,700 in 1999.

The Southern Maryland BRAC Experience

¹ Estimated Economic Impact of Military Relocation for Southern Maryland, Department of Fiscal Services, March 1996. The figure includes both Pax River and Indian Head facilities, 1995 BRAC.

Each year the Maryland Department of Transportation adopts a Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP). This plan identifies those capital projects and programs that the state is going to pursue in the next six years and how the Department will fund those projects. Within MDOT, the following agencies are included in the CTP: Maryland Aviation Administration, Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, State Highway Administration and the Maryland Port Administration.

To assist the state in identifying local transportation priorities for state transportation facilities, jurisdictions will often submit a priority list to the Secretary of Transportation, identifying those projects that they would like to see included in the CTP for construction or project planning. Local consensus on projects is very important and key to any revisions to the CTP.

In addition to the CTP, SHA utilizes their district offices for smaller construction and improvement projects in the counties.

To help St. Mary's County and the region identify their infrastructure needs, the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland (TCC), the regional planning organization with elected officials from all three jurisdictions, St. Mary's County, Calvert County, and Charles County, established the *Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee*. The purpose of *Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee* was to formulate a regional strategy for the base realignment and to identify infrastructure projects necessary to ensure that facilities were adequate to meet the projected growth. TCC identified a priority list for the region that contained twenty-seven (27) infrastructure priorities ranging from education facilities for K-12 and higher education, libraries and transportation projects for roads, transit, and the local airport. The final report was published in June 1998 and became the basis for discussions with MDOT on which projects should be included in the MDOT Consolidated Transportation Plan.

Economic Impact of the Patuxent River Complex

To understand the economic impact of the three naval facilities in Southern Maryland, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland updated a 2002 study prepared by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) and the Jacob France Institute. The 2003 Report, "*Analysis of the Economic Impact of the Pax River Complex, Indian Head River Complex and the Navy Recreation Center Solomons*", analyzed the three bases impact on economic output, employment (number of jobs), employee compensation (salaries) and Fiscal (state and local income and sales taxes).

According to the 2003 report, the three bases employed over 22,800 military personnel, civilians, and contractors. Pax River was the primary employer with 19,200 employees, Indian head 3,569 employees, and Solomons with 74 employees. At this time, the bases provided nearly 1 of 3 jobs in the region and generated over \$80 million in state income and sales taxes.

In St. Mary's County, direct, indirect and induced employment attributed to Pax River was 21,305 jobs. Direct employment accounted for 9,437 jobs. For this study, direct jobs were defined as civilians and military personnel. Indirect jobs included contractors, which accounted for 8,635 jobs of which 8,805 were service jobs in the engineering sector. Induced jobs included retail jobs along with medical jobs for doctors and nurses. The total induced jobs created by the Pax River complex were 3,101.

The bases not only created local jobs with salaries higher than the regional average, but significant income tax revenues were generated. The study indicated that Pax River contributed a total of \$33.5 million in local income tax revenues and that the three Southern Maryland bases contributed 85% of all local taxes received by the St. Mary's County through the piggyback tax.

MDOT's Lessons learned

MDOT's agencies worked with various local government officials and Navy personnel on numerous BRAC initiatives following the 1995 Pax River BRAC. By all accounts, MDOT's performance and professionalism during this period received high praise from personnel directly involved in the various projects. MDOT received high praise for their communication, public outreach, and leadership. During the interviews, several themes emerged on MDOT's role during the Pax River BRAC realignment process, reinforcing many of the activities that MDOT undertook during this period.

1. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Intergovernmental coordination is crucial on very complex projects involving numerous government entities. To ensure coordination, it's important to designate one person within each of MDOT's agencies to act a liaison with the Navy or local jurisdiction. This allows a consistent message to be sent to the local jurisdictions and provides local project managers with one point of contact. Conversely, local governments and agencies should also identify a primary BRAC contact.

During the construction phase of the road projects in St. Mary's County, Maryland State Highway Administration's (MSHA) District 5 office appointed one person to coordinate with the Navy and to conduct monthly progress meetings. These meetings provided an opportunity to identify any issues and concerns that should be brought back to headquarters for decisions or guidance.

2. MAINTAIN THE FOCUS ON BRAC INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

A local jurisdiction's BRAC priority list may contain items not directly associated with BRAC or the requested project may not meet the department's standard for new construction or initiation of new transit service. It's important to try and avoid adding new projects to the BRAC list in order to maintain the focus on truly BRAC related initiatives.

During a time when financial resources and staffing are limited, MDOT should evaluate BRAC infrastructure requests with the same statewide criteria used to determine if a new project planning study or new transit service is warranted in other areas of the state. It is important that all new projects initiated by MDOT comply with MDOT's standards and, if met, then the project should move forward. Allowing projects to move forward that do not meet the standards for new service, opens the Department up to future criticism for not approving similar projects.

3. CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR TRAFFIC AND GROWTH PATTERNS

A BRAC move may occur over time, with new residents choosing to locate in adjoining jurisdictions and workers deciding to commute rather than move. During the transition period, impacts to roadways and transit service may not be realized for many years, and in some cases facilities impacts occur in unexpected areas. Therefore, it's important for MDOT to periodically evaluate travel patterns and levels of service after a BRAC move to identify whether there are new infrastructure needs or adjustments that can be made to the local system such as signal timings. Consultation with the local jurisdiction is important since they can assist in identifying potential areas of concern.

For example, Calvert County saw an increase in southbound traffic on MD 4 since many employees from Crystal City, Virginia chose to commute rather than move to St. Mary's County. This necessitated changing the signal timings along the corridor to adjust for the heavy traffic movements along the corridor.

Commuter traffic to the Pax River base is also impacting the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge, a two lane bridge, which links Calvert to St. Mary's County. The capacity of this important bridge is an issue for the base and region and it has been placed on the 20 year Highway Needs Inventory list. This illustrates the continual need to evaluate transportation capacity within the region and to address issues as they are identified.

4. CONDUCT CONTINUOUS PUBLIC OUTREACH

Keeping the public informed about the various stages of project completion and construction delays is very important. MSHA's District 5 staff conducted monthly meetings with the Navy's coordinator to inform him of lane closures, construction schedules, and project schedules. Continuous public outreach is necessary to keep local officials, base commanders, and the general public informed of MDOT's activities with respect to the various projects and studies. The public is often interested in knowing which activities are moving forward and any obstacles encountered along the way that may delay a project. A multi-media approach (local radio, websites, email, local newspapers, and press releases) is necessary to capture your audience.

Participating in local public outreach efforts is also important for MDOT. In Southern Maryland, the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations reached out to potential new residents by visiting residents who were going to be transferred to Southern Maryland. Packets of information on jobs, housing, schools, recreational opportunities, government services, history of the region and other amenities were created and distributed through meetings and other events. This effort provided an opportunity to affect residents to obtain information on a variety of services.

5. IDENTIFY CUSTOMER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

MDOT also has a role in helping new residents transition into the area. To ease the transition for residents moving to Southern Maryland, MDOT stationed their Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's mobile van at the Pax River base for four years, three days a week. The Navy base provided power and electricity to the full service mobile van. This allowed new residents to obtain driver's licenses, register motor vehicles and obtain tags all in one place without taking time off from work. These types of public outreach activities provide MDOT an opportunity to promote their services and resources.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ARE A LONG TERM INVESTMENT IN THE STATE'S ECONOMY

In 2005, the St. Mary's Department of Economic Development estimated that state and local funding investments in transportation, public and higher education, housing and other facilities to support the Navy was over \$350 million. Investments included MD 4 Widening (\$76.2 million); MD 5, Hughesville Bypass (\$54.0 million); MD 2/4 Prince Frederick Bypass (\$85-95 million); MD 2/4 Intersection with MD 231 (\$23.5 million); MD 237, Pegg Road to MD 235 (\$53.3 million); and Lexington Park Manor (\$13.5 million County Contribution).

The state's return on its investment is seen through the creation of high salary jobs, payroll taxes, state revenue taxes, and local tax revenues such as real estate taxes. BRAC expansion impacts not only the local economy but the regional and state economy as well. In Southern Maryland, MDOT's participation in the BRAC process contributed to economic growth in the region.

Interviews Conducted:

Paul Armstrong, former Maryland State Highway Administration District 5 Engineer, August 3, 2006.

Greg Bowmen, Calvert County Planning Director, August 31, 2006.

Robin Finnacom, former Economic Development Specialist with Tri-County Council, August 30, 2006.

Gary V. Hodge, Former Executive Director of Tri-County Council, August 30 2006.

Jeff Jackman, St. Mary's County, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning, August 9, 2006.

Sally Jameson, District 28 Delegate for Southern Maryland; Executive Director, Charles County Chamber of Commerce and current chairman of the Tri-County Council Regional Advisory Infrastructure Committee, August 4, 2006.

Dave Jenkins, former Executive Director of Tri-County Council, August 23, 2006.

Henry Kay, former Maryland Transit Administration Planning Director, Office of Planning, August 28, 2006.

MaryAnne Polkiewicz, former Maryland Transit Administration, Project Planner.

John Savich, St. Mary's County Director of Economic Development, August 16, 2006.

Tim Smith, former Executive Director, Patuxent River Naval Air Station, August 15, 2006.

Dennis Yoder, Assistant Division Chief (former Regional Planner for Southern Maryland), Maryland State Highway Administration, August 31, 2006.

